FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY REVIEW OFFICE

Business Plan 2003-2004

A. Mission statement:

To review decisions of public bodies relating to applications for access to records, in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Municipal Government Act.

B. Planning context:

As Nova Scotians become more aware of and concerned about their rights to privacy, their expectations of this Office have changed. The Review Office spends about 30% of its time on privacy issues: hearing complaints, answering questions, and speaking publicly on privacy issues. The Review Officer is consulted by a growing number of public bodies including departments of government, hospitals, school boards and universities. This is in marked contrast with past years and the increase in activity, while predicted, was more than expected.

As the Province's access and privacy oversight officer, I and other provincial and territorial information and privacy commissioners were invited to four national privacy conferences. Although some of these conferences are without cost to the Review Office, these meetings effect the Office's travel budget.

As reported in our last budget plan, this Office has begun to provide information sessions to FOIPOP Administrators across the Province. This, as well, impacts on the Office's travel expenses.

C. Strategic Goals:

1. To seek an amendment to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to provide the Review Officer with the explicit mandate to investigate and report on privacy complaints.

2. To further support the Government's goal of openness and accountability to work to increase the public's awareness of its access and privacy rights through public speaking engagements.

D. Core Business Areas:

- To receive requests for review from individuals with respect to decisions of public bodies in response to applications for access to information and to make recommendations to public bodies;

- To attempt mediation to resolve complaints;
- To assist in resolving privacy complaints.

E. Priorities:

- To seek an amendment to the Act to provide the Review Officer with the explicit mandate to investigate and report on privacy complaints.
- To ensure timely responses to "requests for review" and privacy queries

F. Budget context: - to be provided later.

G. Outcomes and outcome measures:

The outcomes intended:

- To complete reviews and issue reports within 85 days 70% of the time.
- To increase the average number of appeals successfully mediated from 38.2% to 43%.
- To increase the number of training sessions for administrators and users from two to four.

H. Human Resources:

- To seek funding and approval for a secretary position.

I. IT Technology:

- To purchase a computer for the secretary position.

February 7, 2003

Darce Fardy
Review Officer